

USDA - Forest Service
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Umatilla National Forest
Notice of 45-day Comment on Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Granite Creek Watershed Mining Analysis

Request for Comment: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Granite Creek Watershed Mining Analysis is now available for a 45-day Comment Period. The Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests propose to authorize the approval of 28 mining Plan of Operations in the Granite Creek Watershed as specified in 36 CFR 228.4(a). Once the Record of Decision is signed and issued, reclamation bonds and any 401 certifications and valid water rights determined necessary as a result of this analysis will be required before the Plans of Operations are approved and prior to commencement of mining activities (FSH 2817.23a (1)) .

The Granite Creek Watershed (approximately 94,480 acres) is located in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and is primarily within the administrative boundaries of the Whitman Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (40,624 acres), and the North Fork John Day Ranger District, Umatilla National Forest (49,539 acres). Approximately 4,150 acres in the watershed are privately held. The Granite Creek Watershed is located approximately 30 miles west of Baker City, in Baker County, Oregon, and 40 miles southeast of Ukiah, in Grant County, Oregon.

The legal description for the watershed is:

Township 8 South, Range 34, 35, 35½ and 36 East
Township 9 South, Range 34, 35, 35½, and 36 East
Township 10 South, Range 34, 35, 35 ½, and 36 East, Willamette Meridian.

This comment period is intended to provide those interested in or affected by this activity an opportunity to make their concerns known. Those who participate and provide timely comments will be eligible to object the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 218 regulations.

Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted written comments specific to the proposed project or activity unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the opportunities for comment. Comments received during this public review of the DEIS will be considered, and a Final EIS and draft Record of Decision will be released for a 45-day review and objection period. For more information on 36 CFR Part 218, see the Federal Register, Volume 78, No. 59, March 27, 2013.

How to Comment and Timeframe: The document can be accessed on the Forest Service website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php?project=2209>. Hard copies of the DEIS can be requested by contacting Darcy Weseman, 541-523-1302, or deweseman@fs.fed.us, or send a letter of request to Darcy Weseman, Whitman Ranger District, PO Box 907, Baker City, OR 97814.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 45 calendar days following publication of The Notice of Availability for this DEIS in the *Federal Register*. The publication date of the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. The Notice of Availability is expected to be published on February 20, 2015 in the Federal Register. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other

source. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period. Jeff Tomac and Ian Reid, District Ranger, are the Responsible Officials.

Written comments must be submitted to: Jeff Tomac, District Ranger, Whitman Ranger District, PO Box 907, Baker City, OR 97814. To be eligible for objection, written comments must include name and postal address; title of proposed project; and specific written comments as defined in 36 CFR 218.25 regarding the proposed project or activity, along with supporting reasons. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours to Sophia Millar via telephone (541) 263-1735, or in person. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-pacificnorthwest-wallowa-whitman-whitmanunit@fs.fed.us. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period and ensure that their comments have been received. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 218.

For further information, please contact Sophia Millar, Team Leader, at (541) 263-1735 or at smillar@fs.fed.us.

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